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## Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume E-7, South Asia, 1969-1972

Released by the Office of the Historian

March 25, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Ayub Khan Resignation

Ayub Khan resigned today after proclaiming martial law and appointing General Yahya Khan -- the Army commander -- Martial Law Administrator. Ayub said, "I cannot preside over the destruction of my country."

The principal question is whether or not this and the declaration of martial law which followed will be accepted by the mass of the people in East Pakistan.

If it is, law and order is likely to be restored rapidly. The new military regime would then presumably pick up the negotiations which Ayub has been carrying on with the opposition leaders to try to work out a new political structure for the country.

If East Pakistan reacts violently to what it may consider a virtual coup by the West Pakistani establishment which has long dominated the country, the situation in the East Wing would be very dangerous. Internal disturbances would probably be even greater than before and the opportunities for foreign meddling, especially by the Communist Chinese, would be increased.

It is impossible at this moment to tell which way things will go. However, there have been recent reports of military movements from West to East Pakistan and Ayub and the army probably feel that the military will be able to cope with the situation or they would not have undertaken their actions at this time.

The possibility that the army moved at its own initiative and forced Ayub's resignation cannot be excluded but initially at least it appears more likely that the move was mutually agreed upon.

Ambassador Oehlert has standby authority to evacuate the 1100 Americans in East Pakistan and the 3,000 Americans in West Pakistan should this become necessary.

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